

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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-----106043 252206Z /75

R 251043Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5858
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 09781

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, MR, MO, AG, SS
SUBJECT: GOS VIEWS ON SAHARA SITUATION

1. DURING CALL ON NOREIGN MINISTRY'S ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS FOR NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST (URIASTE), URIASTE TOLD EMBOFF THAT GOS BELIEVED MAURITANIAN EFFORTS TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THE SAHARAN DILEMMA HAD THUS FAR GONE NOWHERE. IN HIS VIEW, THE GIRM WAS "LIVING ON BORROWED MONEY AND BORROWED TIME", BUT THERE WAS NO SOLUTION WITHOUT FRENCH AGREEMENT AND MOROCCAN ACQUIESCENCE, BOTH OF WHICH APPEAR TO BE FAR OFF. MOREOVER, THE SECTION OF HASSAN'S AUG. 20 SSEECH DEVOTED TO THE SAHARA INDICATED THAT HE CONTINUED TO BELIEVE THAT "IF HE CEDED ONE SQUARE INCH OF THE SAHARA TO THE POLISARIO, HE WAS EFFECTIVELY CEDING HIS THRONE."

2. URIASTE MUSED THAT THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE MAY EVENTUALLY BE FOR THE UN TO STEP IN, BOTH TO KEEP THE PEACE
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IN THE MAURITANIAN ZONE OF THE SAHARA AND TO CARRY OUT A REFERENDUM THERE. URIASTE SAID THIS IDEA SEEMED TO BE PARTICULARLY TROUBLESOME TO THE SOVIETS, WHOSE AMBASSADOR IN MADRID (BOGOMOLOV) HAD TAKEN GREAT PAINS TO IMPRESS ON THE GOS MOSCOW'S SUPPORT FOR TREATING THE SAHARA AS A PURELY AFRICAN PROBLEM AND FOR KEEPING IT OUT OF THE UN.

3. TURNING TO THE SCHEDULED AUG. 30-31 VISIT TO MADRID BY MAURITANIAN FOREIGN MINISTEE LAGHDAF, URIARTE PREDICTED THAT LAGHDAF WOULD COME TO "TELL US THEIR PROBLEMS AND ASK FOR MONEY," AND THAT IT WAS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT LAGHDAF WOULD REQUEST THE GOS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN MAURITANIA'S PURSUIT OF PEACE. IN ANY EVENT, URIARTE INDICATED THAT THE GOS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY DEFLECT ANY SUCH SUGGESTION.

4. COMMENT: URIARTE'S SOMEWHAT VAGUE PRESENTATION TENDED TO CONFIRM OTHER INDICATIONS WE HAVE HAD THAT LAGHDAF'S VISIT IS BEING HANDLED AT HIGHER LEVELS IN THE MINISTRY. HOWEVER, HIS OVERALL REMARKS ARE IN LINE WITH SPANISH PESSIMISM REGARDING CHANCES FOR PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF SAHARA PROBLEM. TODMAN

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